

TO THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND COUNCILLORS

OF THE

REDCAR BOROUGH COUNCIL



MR. MAYOR, MADAM AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year 1943, which has been prepared on the lines indicated in the Ministry of Health's Circulars No. 2773 and 10/44.

The vital statistics furnished for the year by the Registrar-General show a record number of births, and a number of deaths much less than in 1940 and 1941 but still 10% above the pre-war level; this was due to the unusually great number of deaths in the last quarter of the year, associated with an epidemic of influenza. The infant mortality, however, was low, with a rate of less than 46 infant deaths per thousand births, less than the average rate for the country as a whole.

Of the deaths during the year more than one-half (56%) occurred at the ages of 65 years and upwards, nearly one quarter (24%) between the ages of 45 and 64, the remainder (almost 21%) under the age of 45 years. These latter deaths are more to be deplored than those occurring beyond the age of 65, when the normal "three score years and ten" is more or less completed.

In investigating which are the chief causes of death a very different result is obtained if one takes deaths at all ages or if one limits the enquiry to deaths under the age of 45 years; with the former one finds that diseases of the arteries, hæmorrhage into the brain, or heart disease, are together responsible for about one-third of all deaths. Under the age of 45 these causes are responsible in this district only for some 3% of the deaths, and first place is now taken by tuberculosis and the acute infectious diseases, which together now account for almost one-third of the deaths under this age in the borough: the giant in this group is tuberculosis, which, in the Combined Districts, alone killed 20 out of the 33 dying from what are usually regarded as infections (including influenza).

Actually the prevalence of acute infectious disease in the borough has not been high in 1943, with the exception of measles. Of this 445 cases were notified, with one death. There were 65 cases of whooping-cough, with one death; 57 of scarlet fever with one death; and 17 notifications of diphtheria with two deaths, but one of these was a case occurring in a distant borough, the death being assigned to Redcar as that was the usual place of residence. With the exception of 1940, when there were 14 cases of diphtheria notified, the number of cases is the lowest since 1937. Two notifications of cerebro-spinal fever were received, one case ending fatally. The epidemic of influenza which was general throughout the country appeared in the borough in the latter half of November and was short and sharp. A letter was received on December 11 from the Chief Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health announcing that difficulties in dealing with the epidemic due to the shortage of doctors could be met by calling for the assistance of the Army Medical Service. By that time, however, the number of new cases arising had fallen and the medical practitioners in

the district expressed themselves as able to cope with them. Altogether during the year 12 deaths were registered as due to influenza (4% of all deaths) and half of these were in the highest age group : 65 years and upwards.

Immunisation against diphtheria was carried on under the same arrangements as in recent years, and it is estimated that at the end of 1943 two out of every three children in the borough were immunised. This proportion is not yet high enough to be relied on as sufficient to prevent an outbreak among non-immunised children.

Children Immunised against Diphtheria.

Number immunised		Guisborough U.D.	Loftus U.D.	Redcar Borough	Saltburn & Marske U.D.	Skelton & Brotton U.D.
at end of 1941	...	737	493	2,235	1,121	1,419
during 1942	...	429	568	607	863	304
during 1943	...	145	223	890	176	410
Total immunised 1935—1943	...	1,311	1,284	3,732	2,160	2,133
Estimated number of these						
now over 14 years of age	...	60	60	180	900	110
Estimated percentage of children under						
15 years of age now immunised		69	66	67	98	63

During 1943 only thirteen cases of diphtheria in children under the age of 15 years were notified in the Combined Districts (compared with 33 in 1942), and of these, four children had been immunised, while nine cases occurred among the minority of children who had not been immunised. The one death from diphtheria in the Combined Districts occurred in a non-immunised child. I would repeat what I have stated in previous annual reports, that it has been proved that immunisation lessens by several-fold the risk of the individual child contracting diphtheria, and by still more the risk of a fatal termination if he does contract the illness. The lessened number of cases of diphtheria in 1943 cannot be ascribed definitely to immunisation : the disease naturally recurs in waves and it is probable that now we are in the trough of the waves, affording a good chance for every child to have the benefit of immunisation before the next peak of diphtheria comes along. I should like to point out that in Saltburn and Marske Urban District, where for some years a very high proportion of the children has been protected by immunisation, there were no cases of diphtheria in children either in 1943 or 1942.

The number of new cases of tuberculosis (28) is the highest since 1937, and compares with 21 cases in 1942. The number of deaths 15 is also high. The following table shows the recent trend of the number of deaths from tuberculosis in the Combined Districts : —

Deaths from Tuberculosis in Combined Districts.

	(2-year periods).							
Deaths from :	1928-9	1930-1	1932-3	1934-5	1936-7	1938-9	1940-41	1942-3
Tuberculosis of lungs :	63	47	42	38	38	44	50	53
Tuberculosis elsewhere :	27	13	17	15	14	11	9	7
Total	90	70 60	59	53	52	55	59	60

The total deaths from tuberculosis occurring in the Combined Districts are seen to fall from 90 in the earliest two-year period to 52 in the period 1936-1937, and thereafter to rise until in 1942-1943 they just surpassed the number ten years earlier. If however the deaths from tuberculosis of the lungs are taken separately from the deaths from tuberculosis in other parts of the body the important point is seen that deaths from tuberculosis apart from that of the lungs have continued their steady decrease, unaffected apparently by the war, and the rise in deaths from tuberculosis since 1937 is due entirely to tuberculosis of the lungs. There is a difference of origin of the two forms of the disease : tuberculosis of the lungs is practically always due to infection from another human case, while tuberculosis of other parts of the body is in a considerable proportion of cases due to infection from cow's milk. It would seem therefore possible that improvement in tuberculosis of cattle has been maintained during the war, while there have been more deaths from the human form of the disease.

In recent annual reports I have referred to the fact that the last few months of life of the great majority of persons dying from tuberculosis of the lungs are spent in their own homes, where opportunities for spreading the infection are at their greatest. In 1943 in the Combined Districts 27 persons died from tuberculosis of the lungs : of these, five ($18\frac{1}{2}\%$) died in institutions : the remainder, in their own homes.

Water-supply : The Borough Engineer informs me that all houses in the borough are supplied direct from a piped supply ; Dormanstown, Warrenby and part of Coatham are supplied by the Tees Valley Water Board, a few houses at Kirkleatham by the Cleveland Water Co., and the remainder, the majority of the houses in the area, from the Council's supply. The different supplies are constant.

Along with neighbouring districts Redcar suffered from water shortage in the autumn of 1943 but this did not reach as far as total interruption. The Cleveland Water Co., in order to afford some supply to other parts of its area, had to lessen the amount furnished by it to Redcar to vanishing point. The loss was to some extent made up by the Tees Valley Water Board, who agreed to increase the amount of water and the area supplied by them. The result was however that the water pressure in the mains was reduced and many houses for some weeks had a water-supply only on the ground floor. By the beginning of November the situation had improved and the water-supply was again normal.

Samples of the water are submitted for analysis by the Engineer monthly and the reports have been uniformly satisfactory. None of the water-supplies has been found to be plumbo-solvent.

I am, Mr. Mayor, Madam and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

C. R. GIBSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

Guisborough,

15th April, 1944.

Vital Statistics for 1943.

	1943.	1942.	1941.	1940.	1939.
Number of Births	397	387	382	349	378
Number of Deaths	299	284	398	343	288
Infant Mortality Rate ...	45 $\frac{1}{2}$	47	51	60	58

Notifications received in 1943: Scarlet fever, 57; diphtheria, 17; cerebro-spinal fever, 2; erysipelas, 20; pneumonia, 18; puerperal pyrexia, 1; ophthalmia neonatorum, 1; measles, 445; whooping-cough, 65.

Tuberculosis (new cases) in 1943: 20 pulmonary; 8 non-pulmonary.